

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

REPORT

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Maneuvers in Western Bohemia

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large-scale military maneuvers would be held in Western Bohemia from 27 September to 3 October 1954 and the troops taking part in these maneuvers should be back in their garrisons on 6 October 1954 at the latest. these maneuvers would be great on the Czechoslovak railroad system

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2. On 26 September 1954 large convoys of tanks and other military vehicles near Vilemov (NSL/R90). Some of them traveled through Vilemov toward Radonice (NSL/R90), some were parked along the Rubrina rivulet west of Vilemov, where a military camp was established. On the highway Vilemov-Radonice, approximately 40 tanks in eight groups. Each group consisted of five tanks preceded by a motorcycle and followed by three or four trucks. The tanks were camouflaged by nets. They were equipped with guns of approximately 100 mm. caliber.

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The trucks were mostly the 5-ton and 8-ton Tatra trucks carrying troops and some of material under the cover of tarpaulins. Approximately six trucks carried searchlights and towed generators in trailers. There were also two bulldozers and three tank retrievers equipped with cranes in the convoys. Young officers, mostly lieutenants, were sitting next to the drivers in nearly every truck. 80 to 100 trucks were concentrated in this area at the time of his observation. The military camp situated along the Rubrina rivulet was encircled by barbed wire and guarded by sentries armed with submachine guns. Trucks and other military vehicles were parked under the cover of trees within and around this camp. The troops observed there, as well as in the convoys, wore black shoulder boards.

the number of all troops observed by him in this area at approx.

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mately 1,000 men. [redacted] the troops had been coming to the area [redacted] Vilemov and Radonice for [redacted] time from the direction of Zatec (N51/P40), mostly at night, and that they traveled with black-out lights at night. Because of the unusual extent of the military activities in this area, the local population at first assumed that troops were concentrated there for an attack on Western Germany. Later rumors spread among the population that Soviet units were taking part in the large-scale maneuvers, but [redacted] actually saw any Soviet units in the area.

3. In connection with the maneuvers the traffic on the following railroad lines was stopped in the period from 21 September to 5 October 1954: the Vilemov - Douhov (N51/P69) railroad line, Frantiskovy Lazne (N51/P27) - Trebnice (N51/P37) RR line, Cheb (N51/P37) - Slapany (N51/P36) RR line, the RR siding from Cheb to the Cheb airfield, and one track of the double-track Sokolov (N51/P58) - Trebnice RR line in the section between Chlum Sv. Mari (N51/P48) - Citice (N51/P48). On the railroad lines mentioned, except the Vilemov - Douhov line, some 3,000 empty coal cars were placed, evidently in order to facilitate the transport of troops on the main railroad lines. After the maneuvers were finished military transports were loaded into trains in the following railroad stations: Sokolov - 15 trains, Kynsperk nad Ohri (N51/P48), Trebnice, Marianske Lazne (N50/P56), Lazne Kynzavart (N51/P56), and mostly in Pecov nad Teplou (N51/P67). These transports consisted mostly of tanks and trucks. [redacted] the troops taking part in the maneuvers arrived in the area in their vehicles (including tanks) under their own power. The transports of troops from the area by trains and the previous stoppage of the traffic on the above mentioned railroad lines caused freight-train delays throughout Western Bohemia up to six hours and passenger-train delays averaging one hour during the period between 21 September and 5 October 1954. The transport of coal from Czechoslovakia to Western Germany through Cheb nearly ceased at the same time. After the conclusion of the maneuvers the Vilemov - Douhov railroad line had to be repaired because it was considerably damaged by tanks.
4. [redacted] during the maneuvers prominent Czechoslovak personalities, including President Antonin Zapotocky, Minister of National Defense Alexej Copiccka, and other Czechoslovak military dignitaries, as well as Soviet observers, were billeted in the village [redacted] Rybniky (coordinates unknown) from where they made trips into the maneuver area.

[redacted] the civilian population had been evacuated from the Douhov military training area some time ago and [redacted] the villages within this area had been badly damaged by artillery and aircraft bombing.

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